

# Temporary Chairman Theodore A. Bell's Address

Theodore A. Bell of California in taking the gavel as temporary chairman of the democratic national convention spoke as follows:

"We have assembled at a time when the public conscience is demanding honesty of purpose in the men who undertake to direct the affairs of state. The public eye is keenly sensitive to every political movement, and our proceedings here will be approved according to the degree of sincerity appearing in the work of this convention. There is a widespread belief, founded upon evidence of a convincing character, that the party in power has not been true to its trust, that it has betrayed the common interest into the hands of the enemies of good government, thereby forfeiting its right and destroying its ability to rule in the name of the people.

"Apparent to everyone is the fact that way down deep in the heart of the republican convention at Chicago there was a feeling of anger and resentment over the popular clamor for reform, and it is usually patent that there is no bona fide intention on the part of the republican party of granting any reforms, if the machinery of that party can be retained in present hands. Its paper platform divided like ancient Gaul into three parts—barren promises, make-shifts and evasions—it is hoped, will make a good campaign transparency; but no one seriously believes that the republican party really indorses that neutral manuscript which held the convention together until it could ratify the nomination of a presidential candidate.

## NAMES THREE THINGS WHICH CONVENTION SHOULD DO

"Approaching our great task in a manly, dignified manner, imbued with the loftiest sentiments of patriotism, ambitious to throw every safeguard around the liberties of our people, determined to stamp out the buses that are consuming the substance of the nation, let us proceed to our appointed duty with the sustaining consciousness that we are responsible alone to God and to our country for the justness of our cause. (Applause.)

"There are three things that this convention should do: It ought to present in a plain and intelligible manner the serious industrial and political conditions that are disturbing the peace and happiness of our country. We should then proceed to a courageous exposure of the republican policies that are co-operating with private greed in the general oppression of the people. Most important of all, we must exhibit a readiness and an ability to grasp the problems of the hour and to effect their solution in a manner that will satisfy the sober common sense of the multitudes whose interests are at stake. (Applause.)

"Among the great evils that afflict the country at the present time is the abuse of corporate power. At first the advancing aggressions of the corporations are not discernible to the common eye, for every move is carefully covered up until sufficient political strength is attained to defy the protests of the people. Thus the constant and insidious invasion of the people's rights finally results in a species of arrogance and defiance so formidable in its appearance that the body of the people, in fear of ever worse aggressions, hesitate to assert and exercise their rightful authority over these colossal enemies of the commonwealth.

"And so we behold a subversion of our free institutions, a government voluntarily subordinating itself to selfish, private ends special privilege resorting to cunning, bribery and intimidation to maintain its unholy power, while the masses timidly hope that when avarice has at last reached the point of satiety it will then benevolently permit the people to resume their rightful share in the government of themselves. Whenever the mutterings of the people become too threatening the cry of confiscation goes up and appeals are frantically made to the sacred rights of party. This is intended to affright the ears of honest men in the enjoyment of the fruits of their industry and thrift, and by thus playing upon their prejudice and fears to deter them from casting their influence on the side of wholesome reforms. The cry of confiscation is the historic defense of usurpation.

"Let the people take warning. Whenever the wrongs of today become the vested rights of tomorrow the nation is in deadly peril.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DEMAND OF DEMOCRACY

"The democratic party is not the enemy of property; but to the contrary, it has always stood and will continue to stand firmly against every species of aggression that would deprive any man of the rewards to which his patience, his skill, his industry and his economy entitle him. Our party approves that feeling of pride which always accompanies the possession of property, and it commends an individual ownership in the soil that will bring to the homes of America more of the conveniences, comforts and luxuries of life. Against the evils of special privilege we urge the benefits of equal opportunity, in order that there may be more land owners, more homes, and more happiness among the masses.

"The democratic party is not an enemy of all corporations. It recognizes their great value in the industrial world. Through the agency of incorporation scattered wealth is brought together and given a driving force that it would not otherwise possess. Great enterprises are thereby undertaken and the undeveloped resources of the country added to the wealth of the world.

"Our party is not opposed to production on a large scale, but it is unalterably opposed to monopoly in production. It is easier to prevent monopoly than it is to control it after being established. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the withdrawal of special privileges will take away the meat upon which the trusts are fed. If this be followed by a criminal prosecution and an imprisonment of the directors and officers of the guilty corporations, monopoly will be shorn of many of its terrors.

"No rational man can be opposed to corporations as such, and the assertion that the democratic party is waging an indiscriminate war against this convenient form of transacting business has no foundation in fact. It is the abuse only of corporate power that we seek to eliminate.

"Viewed in the light of a great moral question the control of corporations should remain a question of common concern rather than a political one, but the shameful complacency of the republican party in permitting its forces to be controlled and operated by the most offending corporations of the country throws the problem into the political arena and compels the public to choose between the democratic party that will, and the republican party that will not place some restrictions on incorporated greed.

"We are confronted with the inquiry: What assurance has the republican party given that it will use the forces at its command to restore the people to their rights? In its Chicago platform it did not make even a decent pretense of championing the people's cause and the proceedings of that convention are glaringly insincere. It was noted that the elements were present in that gathering, one with sufficient votes to adopt a platform and nominate its candidate, the other powerful enough to unwrite that platform and tie the hands of the nominee. (Applause.)

## REPUBLICANS PROMISE THAT WHICH THEY REFUSED TO DO

"The distinguishing feature of the Chicago platform is its oft-repeated promise to do a lot of things that the republican party has heretofore failed to do. That party went to Chicago fresh from the halls of congress, where an overwhelming republican majority in both branches enabled it to propose and to adopt any legislation that it chose. Does the republican party believe that it can be absolved from its dereliction of duty by an empty promise to do in the future what it has wilfully failed to do in the past?

"Someone has suggested that this convention should publish an indictment against the republican party. We can probably expedite the proceedings by entering the plea of guilty that is contained in the Chicago platform, simply changing the words 'We will' to the words 'We did not' to conform to the admitted facts. We then have the following republican confession of guilt:

"We did not revise the tariff.  
"We did not amend the anti-trust laws to secure greater effectiveness in the prosecution of criminal monopolies.

"We did not add a single line to the interstate commerce law, giving the federal government supervision over the issues of stocks and bonds by interstate carriers.

"We did not exact a currency measure that would mitigate the evils of a financial panic, such as has recently prostrated the country under a republican administration.

"We did not limit the opportunities for abusing the writ of injunction.

"We did not establish postal savings banks.  
"We did not establish a bureau of mines and mining.

"We did not admit into the union the territories of New Mexico and Arizona as separate states.

"We did not, although requested so to do by the president, originate an inland waterways commission for the improvement of the great waterways along comprehensive and scientific lines.

## PRESIDENT'S DEMAND FOR POSTAL BANKS REFUSED

The last congress was in session during a financial crisis, when innumerable banking institutions, preferring a holiday to a funeral, closed their doors and filled the minds of millions of depositors with anxiety and fear. The sentiment in favor of postal savings banks, which had been steadily growing in this country, became almost universal during the recent panic. So insistent became the voice of the people that the president sent a special message to congress urging the establishment of postal savings banks where the earnings of our people might be safely deposited under the direct control and responsibility of the federal government and where no speculating bank cashier or managing board of directors could eat up the savings of years.

"The United States senate showed its hearty sympathy with this popular demand and its profound respect for the president by adjourning the senate while the message was being read; while over in the house of representatives they refused to suspend the roll call long enough to receive the communication that had been sent there from the White House.

"The Chicago platform points with pride to the passage of a child labor law for the District of Columbia. Let the republican party go further than the enactment of penal laws, and in the name of humanity use its vast energies for the removal of the conditions that are forcing our children into the labor market. (Applause.)

"It is the reign of monopoly that is emptying our school houses and filling the sweatshops with child labor and the same system of monopoly is fast limiting the opportunities for independent livelihood among those who are forced into the industrial field, and thus it is doubly blighting that hope of youth which in former stages of our national growth opened an avenue of honor and independence to every child reared upon our soil.

## WRIT OF INJUNCTION MUST NOT BE WEAPON OF OPPRESSION

"The most palpable instance of the insincerity of the Chicago convention is found in its declaration respecting the issuance of injunctions.

"It would have been entitled to more respect if it had omitted all mention of the subject. At session after session of congress labor has pleaded for relief from the abuses of injunction, but its appeals have fallen on deaf ears and there has been no indication that remedial legislation of any character would be enacted. The oligarchy in house and senate has decided that nothing shall be done to weaken any advantage that corporations have gained in labor disputes.

"The fact is that all our citizens, without respect to station or occupation in life, have a genuine respect for the courts and desire to maintain their integrity.

"The charge that the courts are being assailed is simply made for the purpose of diverting attention from the real issue. Heretofore it has not been considered treason or an unwarranted attack upon the honor of the courts to define their jurisdiction, prescribe their procedure, restrict their processes and generally to fix the bounds within which judicial functions shall be exercised.

"It makes no difference whether the courts